

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	3409 Woodley Road NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	X Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 26, 2011	X Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	11-275	X Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	New Construction

Cunningham/Quill Architects, representing the owners, return to the Board to seek concept approval for widening the driveway at 3409 Woodley Road in the Cleveland Park Historic District. In January, the Board approved an addition at this property (with revisions), but declined to make a decision on the driveway without additional information.

The house was constructed in 1922. The driveway, with its “grapevine joint” retaining walls, is original to the property. The proposal submitted would widen the 7’9” driveway to 9’7” and reconstruct the western retaining wall. The owners and architect have since agreed to reduce the width to 9’0” at the request of the ANC.

To provide context for the proposal at 3409 Woodley Road and to address concerns of the Board regarding establishing a precedent for the expansion of driveways in the Cleveland Park Historic District, HPO staff conducted an informal survey of Cleveland Park driveway and parking pad widths on February 16, 2011. The survey was conducted to find out how many driveways and parking pads did *not* meet the minimum width requirements established by the Zoning Code (8’ width for compact cars, 9’ width for standard sized cars).

The survey was not based on driveway width alone, but also on whether or not there were walls or significant grades at a height taller than 12” (similar to the situation at the subject property), which would impede the opening of car doors. Narrow driveways without walls or sharp grades (i.e. that open to flat grade on one or both sides) were found to be relatively common, but these do not restrict access or car doors from opening and would not require the removal of character-defining walls or changes in grading.

Driveways less than 8’ wide include the subject property (7’9”), 3403 Lowell (7’3”), 3125 Newark (7’8”), 3610 Idaho (7’11”). Driveways less than 9’ wide include 3405/07 Woodley (8’1”), 3411 Lowell (8’9”), 3600 Idaho (8’5”), 3512 Macomb (8’7”), and 3235 Macomb (8’7”).

In addition, the HPO staff found numerous examples of driveways and parking pads that had been modestly expanded in width (approximately 6’-18”) by the insertion of pavers or stone. By and large, these modest (presumably unpermitted) expansions had negligible impact on the appearance and the overall proportions of the drive to the yard. In all, it appears that there are very few narrow driveways where walls are problematic, indicating that the project at 3409 Woodley would be limited as a “precedent-setter.”

The architect has submitted photographs showing the quality of masonry work that is available. The architect worked with the masonry contractor who performed the work pictured at a nearby residence on Woodley Road.

Evaluation and Recommendation

Based on the staff's discovery that there are a significantly small number of houses in Cleveland Park with conditions that match those of 3409 Woodley Road, and the presence of numerous sensitively widened driveways, the HPO finds that widening the driveway here would not create a precedent for driveway alterations in Cleveland Park.

In addition, the architect's proposal to document the location and coursing pattern of the stones prior to disassembly and to reconstruct the wall in the identical pattern, assures that the relocated wall will truly retain its historic appearance. In addition, the HPO will assure that the quality of the mason's work matches that shown in the photographs through a mockup on-site.

The HPO previously had concerns that the driveway widening would alter the character of this property and the Cleveland Park neighborhood, but through further study finds that the proposed driveway widening, using the existing stones and replicating the pattern of the coursing and mortar joints, is compatible with the subject house and the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District.

For the driveway, the HPO strongly encourages the use of tinted concrete with exposed aggregate to match the concrete at the top of the driveway or that the driveway be paved with two strips with plant material between to resemble historic driveway design.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the driveway widening project in concept and delegate final approval to staff.